

Today Congressman Blumenauer testified before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs to ask that Congress continue to provide the resources necessary to ensure that people in developing countries have access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities. His written testimony is available for [download](#) [PDF].

**The lack of access to clean water and sanitation remains the world's largest health problem**, resulting in the deaths of 1.8 million children under the age of five every year – *that is almost 5,000 deaths a day*.

Nearly 900 million people lack access clean drinking water and 2.6 billion people do not have access to sanitation facilities. More than 80 percent of the global health burden is water related, and at any given time, **people suffering from water illnesses occupy more than half of the world's hospital beds.**

Congressman Blumenauer has worked tirelessly on this issue for over a decade. He introduced in the House the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act, which passed in 2005 and made, for the first time in U.S. history, access to water and sanitation a priority of U.S. foreign policy.

**Because of this legislation, millions of life-threatening illnesses have been prevented.**

**Congressman Blumenauer knows that investing a small amount of money in water and sanitation can save thousands of lives**, break the cycle of poverty for women and children by freeing them from the all-consuming task of gathering water, and promote economic development. That's why he will continue push for this funding.

Water has a profound impact on the most important issues of our time. It is impossible to discuss climate change, public health, education, food security, women's issues, or economic development without addressing water. **Clean water can bring stability and prosperity, lack of it can lead to crisis.**

**The scope of the problem is truly global.** There are over 260 river basins that cross at least one international border. Sharing this finite resource between countries and providing equity in access will require greater leadership from the U.S. Already 40 percent of the world's population lives in areas of water scarcity. With the Earth's population growing by 83 million people every year, the demand – and the consequences of inaction – will only increase.

This spring, **Congressman Blumenauer will introduce legislation that will strengthen the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act**

by creating permanent senior water advisor positions with the State Department and the US Agency for International Development so that we have a comprehensive water and sanitation strategy.